

# Jesus Answers the Question from John the Baptist

Here's a **Full Breakdown** of:  **Matthew 11:1–19** and  **Luke 7:18–35**  
*Jesus responds to John the Baptist's doubts and critiques the current generation.*



## PARALLEL PASSAGE OVERVIEW

Event	 <b>Matthew 11:1–19</b>	 <b>Luke 7:18–35</b>
John sends messengers to Jesus	v.2–3	v.18–20
Jesus' response to John	v.4–6	v.21–23
Jesus' testimony about John	v.7–15	v.24–28
Generation's rejection	v.16–19	v.29–35



## CONTEXT & BACKDROP

### Historical & Cultural

- **John is in prison** (Herod Antipas imprisoned him at Machaerus).
- **Expectation of the Messiah** was high, but confusing—John had proclaimed Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29), but Jesus hadn't fulfilled nationalistic hopes (e.g., overthrowing Rome).
- **Jesus' miracles** were being reported widely; John heard about them even in prison (Luke 7:18).



### Narrative Flow

This passage sits **between rising opposition** and **growing misunderstanding** of who Jesus really is—even from faithful forerunners like John the Baptist.



## SECTION BY SECTION



### **Matthew 11:1 / Luke 7:18**

Jesus finishes instructing His disciples and continues teaching and preaching in Galilean cities.

- Jesus is **active in ministry**, not static or hiding.
- John's disciples **hear reports** and are confused by Jesus' style and mission.



### **JOHN'S QUESTION: "Are You the One?" (Matthew 11:2–3 | Luke 7:18–20)**

"Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

- Greek: *ho erchomenos* ("the Coming One") — a Messianic title (see Psalm 118:26).
- This isn't full doubt—it's more likely **confused faith** due to Jesus not matching the fiery judgment John preached (Matt 3:10–12).

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## ✨ JESUS' RESPONSE (Mt 11:4–6 | Lk 7:21–23) "Go and report what you hear and see..."

Miracle	OT Echo
Blind receive sight	Isaiah 35:5
Lame walk	Isaiah 35:6
Lepers cleansed	Leviticus 13–14; 2 Kings 5
Deaf hear	Isaiah 29:18
Dead raised	1 Kings 17, 2 Kings 4; anticipated in Isaiah 26:19
Gospel to the poor	Isaiah 61:1–2

- Jesus **quotes Messianic prophecies**, subtly pointing John to Scripture.
- “Blessed is the one who does not stumble on account of Me” – gentle rebuke or encouragement not to lose faith.

## 👑 JESUS' TESTIMONY ABOUT JOHN (Mt 11:7–15 | Lk 7:24–28) “What did you go out to see?”

Comparison	Meaning
A reed swayed?	No—John was not weak or trendy.
Soft clothes?	No—he was not part of royal luxury (Herod’s court).
A prophet?	Yes—and more. He is the <b>messenger</b> of Malachi 3:1.

### "Elijah who was to come" (v.14):

- Refers to **Malachi 4:5** — John is not Elijah reincarnated, but he comes in **Elijah’s spirit and power** (Luke 1:17).

### v.11 / v.28:

“Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John... yet the least in the kingdom is greater.”

- Paradox: **John represents the end of the Old Covenant era.**  
Those in the New Covenant (even the “least”) will see the fulfillment he only anticipated.

## THIS GENERATION’S RESPONSE (Mt 11:16–19 | Lk 7:29–35)

“We played the flute for you... We sang a dirge...”

A metaphor for the **inconsistency** and **immaturity** of the people:

- John was **too ascetic** (fasted, wilderness).
- Jesus was **too social** (eating, drinking).

### "Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds/children":

- Both John and Jesus were **rejected**, but their **ministry bore fruit** and proved they were from God.

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## THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Theme	Explanation
✓ Messianic Identity	Jesus reaffirms who He is through <b>fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy</b> , not military might.
⌚ Navigating Doubt	John's question invites <b>honest faith wrestling</b> . Jesus doesn't condemn him.
📜 Kingdom Shift	Jesus contrasts <b>Old vs. New Covenant</b> —John is the last great prophet under the old system.
👉 Prophetic Rejection	Both John and Jesus are <b>rejected</b> , reflecting Israel's historic resistance to God's messengers.



## WORD STUDIES

Greek Word	Meaning	Used In
<b>σκανδαλισθῆ</b> (skandalisthē)	"to stumble, be offended"	Mt 11:6 / Lk 7:23 – Jesus warns not to stumble over His unexpected ways.
<b>μαλακοῖς</b> (malakois)	"soft" (luxurious)	Mt 11:8 – John wasn't soft like palace dwellers.
<b>γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν</b> (gennētois gynaikōn)	"born of women"	Mt 11:11 / Lk 7:28 – emphasizing John's human greatness.



## COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS

Element	John the Baptist	Jesus
Lifestyle	Isolated, ascetic	Social, eating with sinners
Perception	"Has a demon"	"Glutton and drunkard"
Message	Repent or perish	Mercy, healing, and teaching
Outcome	Imprisoned, beheaded	Crucified



## MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT

- Jesus fulfills **Isaiah 35**, **Isaiah 61**, and **Malachi 3–4**, but in a way that surprises.
- He is not the **militant deliverer**, but the **suffering servant, healer**, and **teacher**.

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Here's a **detailed breakdown** of **Machaerus**, the fortress where **John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded**—rich in historical, archaeological, and biblical significance.

## **FORTRESS OF MACHAERUS**

*The Final Imprisonment and Martyrdom Site of John the Baptist*

### **LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY**

Feature	Detail
 <b>Location</b>	Modern-day Jordan, east of the Dead Sea, near the village of Mukawir
 <b>Elevation</b>	Approx. 3,800 ft (1,100 m) above sea level — strategic view over the Dead Sea
 <b>View</b>	On a clear day, one can see Jerusalem to the west and Petra to the south
 <b>Position</b>	Frontier fortress protecting the eastern edge of Judea against the Nabateans

### **HISTORY & ARCHITECTURE**

Period	Description
 <b>Built by</b>	<b>Alexander Jannaeus</b> (Hasmonean king, ~90s BC)
 <b>Destroyed by</b>	<b>Gabinius</b> , Roman governor, in 57 BC
 <b>Rebuilt by</b>	<b>Herod the Great</b> (37–4 BC) as a royal palace-fortress
 <b>Inherited by</b>	<b>Herod Antipas</b> , son of Herod the Great

#### Features included:

- Luxurious **Herodian** palace architecture
- Large **cisterns** for water storage
- Bathhouses with Roman-style mosaics
- Double defensive walls, towers, and a dungeons/prison area

#### Archaeologists have uncovered:

- A **dungeon-like cave** beneath the courtyard (likely prison area)
- A **banquet hall** (possibly the setting of Salome's dance and Herod's rash vow)

### **BIBLICAL CONNECTION: JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Gospel	Account
 <b>Matthew 14:1–12</b>	John denounces Herod Antipas' unlawful marriage to Herodias → imprisoned → beheaded at her request
 <b>Mark 6:14–29</b>	More detailed narrative: Herod fears John, protects him, but is manipulated by Herodias via Salome's dance
 <b>Luke 3:19–20</b>	Notes John's rebuke of Herod's marriage and subsequent imprisonment

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## HEROD'S DILEMMA

- Herod **admired** John but was politically trapped.
- Salome's dance **pleased Herod**, who rashly promised her anything.
- Prompted by **Herodias**, she asked for John's **head on a platter**.
- John was executed **likely in the prison dungeon at Machaerus**.
- His **disciples buried his body and told Jesus** (Matt. 14:12).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

Discovery	Significance
 Foundations of palace	Confirm Herodian style and connection to Gospel accounts
 Cisterns & prison chambers	Support traditional identification as John's prison
 Banquet hall remains	Aligns with location of the infamous royal birthday party
 Roman bath mosaics	Indicate royal luxury amidst an otherwise rugged setting

 Excavations were carried out in the 1960s by **Jerry Vardaman**, and later in the 1970s by **Győző Vörös**, whose team confirmed the **Herodian layout** and probable **site of John's execution**.

## THEMATIC SIGNIFICANCE

Theme	Significance
 <b>Prophetic Suffering</b>	John mirrors Elijah—boldly confronting kings, suffering persecution
 <b>Earthly Power vs. Divine Truth</b>	Herod's palace represents luxury and control; John represents truth and self-denial
 <b>Foreshadowing Jesus</b>	John's fate anticipates Jesus' unjust death under corrupt leaders
 <b>Moral Confrontation</b>	John's call for righteousness cost him his life—but also sealed his legacy as the forerunner to Christ

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Here are four images that give you a layered view of Machaerus:

- Top-left: The ruins as they appear today—rocky walls and a few re-erected columns near the summit, overlooking the Dead Sea.
- Top-right: A detailed artists' reconstruction showing how the fortress and palace may have appeared in the time of Herod Antipas.
- Bottom-left: A 3D reconstruction highlighting the palace's layout, the surrounding lower town, and its hilltop position.
- Bottom-right: A cutaway-style visualization showing interior spaces like the courtyard, triclinium, prison area, and mikveh beneath the royal complex

